

In the Claims:

Cancel claim 4.

Amend claims 1, 5, 10, 16 and 21 as shown below in the entire set of pending claims. Underlines indicate insertions; ~~strikeouts~~ indicate deletions.

1                   1.     (Currently Amended) An apparatus for tracking usage  
2 information for an image forming device, comprising:  
3                   an image forming device;  
4                   processing circuitry associated with the image forming device;  
5                   computer program code implemented on the processing circuitry  
6 and operative to count page-area and toner coverage at the image forming  
7 device collected on a print job-by-print job basis; ~~and~~  
8                   memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative to  
9 store a data file containing user information, output job information, and the  
10 usage information comprising total page area used and toner used; and  
11                   a tracking apparatus configured to implement hybrid pull-push data  
12 gathering of transaction details from the image forming device including  
13 consumable usage information.

1                   2.     (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the data file is a  
2 census transaction data file comprising cost accounting information of  
3 consumables utilized by the image forming device when generating output jobs.

1                   3.     (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the  
2 total page area comprises paper usage and the output job information comprises  
3 information detailing a print job.

1                   4.     (Cancelled)

1                   5.     (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~[[4]]~~1 further  
2 comprising a plurality of image forming devices, and wherein the tracking

3 apparatus polls the image forming devices to collect transaction details at each  
4 of the image forming devices, and wherein at least one of the image forming  
5 devices is configured to push the transaction details to the tracking apparatus  
6 device, if not polled, prior to a memory overflow event occurring on the at least  
7 one image forming device.

1 6. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 5 further  
2 comprising a user interface configured to receive unique user identification  
3 information from a user at the image forming device, wherein the processing  
4 circuitry receives the user identification information and merges the user  
5 identification information with cost data upon job completion.

1 7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 further comprising a  
2 domain controller, wherein a user submits a print job to the image forming  
3 device from the client computer, and wherein the domain controller verifies  
4 identification of the user.

1 8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the image  
2 forming device includes a user interface, and wherein a walk-up user submits a  
3 copy job to the image forming device via the user interface.

1 9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the user  
2 interface includes a reader operative to identify the walk-up user.

1 10. (Currently Amended) A hard copy output device usable with  
2 a local area network (LAN) and a client computer, comprising:

3 processing circuitry communicating with the hard copy output  
4 device and operative to receive LAN data packets from the client computer over  
5 the LAN that identify a user and a print job; ~~and~~

6 memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative to  
7 store a data file containing the LAN data packets and consumable usage  
8 information including actual toner usage; and

9           a tracking apparatus configured to implement hybrid pull-push data  
10 gathering of transaction details including consumable usage information from the  
11 hard copy output device, the LAN includes a plurality of hard copy output  
12 devices, and the tracking apparatus being configured to poll the plurality of hard  
13 copy output devices to collect the transaction details at each of the hard copy  
14 output devices, and wherein at least one of the hard copy output devices is  
15 configured to push the transaction details to the tracking apparatus that is not  
16 polled prior to a memory overflow event occurring on the at least one hard copy  
17 output device.

1           11. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein the  
2 consumable usage information comprises paper usage and toner usage collected  
3 at the hard copy output device corresponding with print job completion.

1           12. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 11 further  
2 comprises a user interface configured to enable a user to input a user  
3 identification.

1           13. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein cost  
2 information is collected at the hard copy output device on a print-job-by-print-job  
3 basis.

1           14. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein the hard  
2 copy output device increments page counts to obtain cost information.

1           15. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 10 further  
2 comprising an LDAP server and a local area network (LAN), wherein the LDAP  
3 server maintains user information and is operative to implement consumable cost  
4 recovery.

1           16. (Currently Amended) A method of accounting for  
2 consumable usage for an image forming device, comprising:

3 collecting data identifying a user and a print job;  
4 storing the data in a memory of the image forming device;  
5 generating a print job with the image forming device;  
6 determining consumable usage data including actual toner usage at  
7 the image forming device; ~~and~~  
8 storing the consumable usage data in the memory of the image  
9 forming device; and  
10 obtaining transaction details and consumable usage information  
11 from the image forming device using a hybrid pull-push data gathering scheme.

1 17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of  
2 storing the consumable usage data in the memory comprises storing the page  
3 usage and the toner usage in the memory associated with the data identifying  
4 the user and the print job.

1 18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein the  
2 data identifying a user and a print job comprises packet data including a user  
3 login name and password.

1 19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the  
2 step of collecting packet data is carried out at a client personal computer, and  
3 further comprising generating a transaction data file including cost accounting  
4 information and generating a data file in the memory of the image forming  
5 device correlating the data identifying the user, the print job, and the cost  
6 accounting information.

1 20. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of  
2 generating a print job comprises requesting a print job from a client computer  
3 and forwarding the request over a local area network to the image forming  
4 device.

1 21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for tracking usage  
2 information for an image forming device, comprising:

3 an image forming device;  
4 processing circuitry associated with and provided within the image  
5 forming device;  
6 computer program code implemented on the processing circuitry  
7 and operative to count page-area and toner coverage at the image forming  
8 device collected on a print job-by-print job basis;  
9 a tracking apparatus configured to implement hybrid pull-push data  
10 gathering of transaction details including consumable usage information from the  
11 image forming device; and  
12 memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative to  
13 store a data file containing the user information, the output job information, and  
14 the usage information comprising total page area used and toner used,  
15 wherein number of pages printed by the image forming device is  
16 determined by counting pages printed downstream of a fuser on an output side  
17 of the image forming device.

1 22. (Previously presented) An apparatus for tracking usage information  
2 for an image forming device, comprising:  
3 processing circuitry associated with and provided within the image  
4 forming device;  
5 computer program code implemented on the processing circuitry  
6 and operative to count page-area and toner coverage at the image forming  
7 device collected on a print job-by-print job basis;  
8 a tracking apparatus configured to implement hybrid pull-push data  
9 gathering of transaction details from the image forming device including  
10 consumable usage information;  
11 memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative to  
12 store a data file containing the user information, the output job information, and  
13 the usage information comprising total page area used and toner used for print  
14 jobs that are actually processed by the image forming device; and  
15 wherein number of pages printed by the image forming device is  
16 determined by counting pages printed on an output side of a fuser of the image  
17 forming device.